

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-13

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INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 H-01 DRC-01

PM-03 SP-01 ACDA-10 MC-02 L-02 IO-03 AID-10 EB-03

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O R 100940Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4537

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

WHITE HOUSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6117

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XC US

SUBJ: MAY 8 EA PRESS SUMMARY OF NYT'S JOHN FINNEY ARTICLE ON
SENATE PASSAGE OF KENNEDY AMENDMENT

1. DESPITE GREAT PRESSURE FROM AMERICAN MEDIA FOR COMMENT WE
HAVE REFUSED TO MAKE ANY, SAYING THAT ALL COMMENT WILL HAVE TO
COME FROM DOS AND DOD IN WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, MAY 8 EA
PRESS SUMMARY ATTRIBUTES TO NYT'S FINNEY STATEMENTS WHICH GIVE
US SOME CONCERN HERE.

2. FOR EXAMPLE: "TO STAY WITHIN CEILING, SOURCES SUGGESTED IT
MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO CUT BACK SOME PROGRAMS, INCLUDING F 5E
DELIVERIES." COMING ON TOP OF RECENT CHANGES IN DISTRIBUTION
PATTERN OF F 5ES IN PACIFIC, THIS IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO CONTINUED
RVN OR ARVN MORALE.

3. SIMILARLY, "DESPITE DOD CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED EARLIER THIS YEAR,
DOD OFFICIALS PRIVATELY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ARVN BEING WASTEFUL
IN AMMO USE AND SENATE ACTION MIGHT FORCE IT TO BE MORE CON-
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SERVATIVE." IN FACE OF THE CONCLUSION OF SIR ROBERT THOMPSON

THAT ARVN EXPENDITURES OF AMMUNITION ABOUT ONE TENTH THAT U.S. FORCES WOULD HAVE USED IN SIMILAR LEVEL OF COMBAT ACTIVITY AND FURTHER FACT THAT UNDER SPECIFIC DIRECTION OF PRES THIEU, CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN UNDERWAY SINCE JANUARY TO REDUCE AMMO EXPENDITURES TO ABSOLUTELY MINIMUM, STATEMENT OF DOD SOURCE BOTH INACCURATE AND MISLEADING.

4. AGAIN, "OFFICIALS CLOSE TO DEFSEC ALSO SUGGESTING THAT MIL SITUATION IN SVN NOT AS GRAVE AS DEPICTED EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN AMB MARTIN WAS SUGGESTING THAT CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT TO CUT MIL AID WAS PART OF HANOI-DIRECTED CAMPAIGN. DOD OFFICIALS SAID LEVEL OF FIGHTING HAD BEEN LOWER THAN PREDICTED BY USEMBASSY, AND THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THUS FAR ARVN HAD NOT BEEN FORCED TO 'STAND DOWN' FOR LACK OF MIL SUPPLIES FROM U.S." FACTS, OF COURSE, ARE THAT (1) LEVEL OF FIGHTING HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN PREDICTED BY USEMBASSY, (2) WHAT AMB SAID ABOUT HANOI INSPIRED CAMPAIGN TO CUT MIL AND ECON AID WAS COMPLETELY TRUE AS SUBSEQUENT EVENTS HAVE BORNE OUT AND (3) THAT IF MILITARY SITUATION NOT NOW AS GRAVE AS FEARED THIS YEAR IT IS LARGELY RESULT OF AGGRESSIVE COUNTER ACTION BY ARVN TO REPEATED NVA VIOLATIONS OF PARIS AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ACTION JUST COMPLETED AGAINST THE NVA 5TH DIVISION.

5. WE WILL CONTINUE HERE TO DEFER ALL INQUIRIES TO WASHINGTON TO AVOID ANY COMMENT THAT MIGHT CREATE UNFAVORABLE REACTION ON FY 75 AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATION ON WHICH WE ALL SHOULD CONCENTRATE OUR ATTENTION. MAIN OBJECTIVE IN REFERRING INQUIRIES TO WASHINGTON WAS TO AVOID SOME INTELLIGENT AND PERSISTENT REPORTER DISCOVERING THAT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE NAVY PROGRAM, WHICH, MANAGED LOCALLY, SHOWS SMALL SURPLUS, SAIGON FOR MONTHS HAD NO FIRM FIGURES ON WHAT CHARGES HAD BEEN MADE AGAINST THE FY 74 ARMY AND AIR FORCE PROGRAMS WHICH WERE "MANAGED" IN WASHINGTON.

6. WE DID NOT, AND DO NOT NOW, BELIEVE VENTILATION OF ALL THIS WOULD SERVE ANY U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS. WE HOPE THAT, IN THE FUTURE, DOD SOURCES MIGHT KEEP THE SAME CRITERIA IN MIND AS THEY SEARCH FOR PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF HOW WE GET FROM HERE TO JUNE 30 IF SENATE ACTION IS SUSTAINED BY HOUSE. FROM HERE, THE BEST TREATMENT WOULD SEEM TO BE CONCENTRATING ON THE DISTORTIONS
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THAT WILL APPEAR LATER IN THE PIPELINE.
MARTIN

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NNN

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